Dean Heller
U.S. Senator *for* Nevada

Heller Carries Lake Tahoe Restoration Act Across Senate Finish Line

(Washington, DC) – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) issued the following statement today after the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act passed the Senate as part of *the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA)*. This bipartisan legislation provides federal, state, and local partners important tools to reduce wildfire threats, improve water clarity, jumpstart innovative infrastructure projects, and combat invasive species.

"In Nevada, we know how lucky we are to possess one of America's most pristine natural treasures: Lake Tahoe. And it is imperative Lake Tahoe's value is reflected in the way our nation prioritizes its own needs. That's why I'm proud to see this legislation, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, successfully gain support of the Senate chamber today," said Heller.

Heller continued, "With five generations of Hellers enjoying the Lake Tahoe Basin, this bill hits close to home for me. As the leading voice on this legislation, I'm proud of the manner in which it was pushed to new heights. Input from all key stakeholders, secured commitments of support from previous opponents, committee passage, and ultimately, success on the Senate floor were all deserved fruits of a hard labor. I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for garnering bipartisan support for this legislation."

BACKGROUND:

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act invests $415 million in the Tahoe Basin over the next 10 years toward:

- **Wildfire Prevention** – Provides $150 million for fire risk reduction and forest management. These dollars go toward fuel reduction projects in high-risk areas like South Shore, Carnelian Bay, Incline, and West shore stewardship contracts to restore forest health and wildlife habitat, and municipal water infrastructure to support improved flows for firefighting.
- **The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP)** – Provides $80 million to jumpstart projects spanning from new bike trails to creek restoration and fire treatment. Some previous EIP projects that have benefited the region include the Heavenly Gondola and Village, the Angora Fire rehabilitation, Lake View Commons, the Sand Harbor Visitor Center, and the

Incline Creek Restoration.

- **The Invasive Species Management Program** – Provides $45 million to prevent the introduction of the quagga mussel and manage other harmful invasive species like the Asian clam. This includes lake-wide aquatic invasive species control and a watercraft inspection program.
- **Storm water Projects** – Sets aside $113 million to implement storm water management, erosion control, and watershed restoration projects. Storm water runoff from roads and the urban areas in the basin, vehicle exhaust, altered wetlands and streams, and inadequate storm water pollution control have significantly impacted Lake Tahoe's famous clarity.
- **The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Program** – Allocates $20 million to recover the Lahontan cutthroat trout – a federally threatened species and Nevada's state fish.
- **Increases Accountability and Oversight** – Provides $5 million to ensure projects will have monitoring and assessment in order to determine the most cost-effective projects and ensure dollars are properly utilized.
- **Overall Management Improvement** – Sets aside $2 million to cover the cost of land exchanges and sales on both the California and Nevada sides of the Tahoe Basin that will improve efficiencies of public land management.

The federal government owns nearly 80 percent of the land in the Lake Tahoe Basin, creating a significant responsibility for its agencies to contribute to the ongoing management of its natural resources. The $415 million authorized under the Senate bill ensures the federal government's share of this responsibility is met.

Last week, Senator Heller spoke on the Senate floor about the policy initiatives included in the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The remarks as prepared and the video can both be found here.

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